



(U//~~FOUO~~) History Today - 12 October 2006

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(U) One of the most successful espionage rings set up in World War II was known as the "Lucy" ring. Set up by the Soviets in 1939 in Switzerland, it eventually provided them with critical information about German military capabilities through October 1943 when the Swiss, acting under severe German pressure, finally shut it down.

(U) The information provided to the Soviets by "Lucy" included detailed order of battle of the German forces poised to invade the USSR in June 1941, information disbelieved by the Soviets until the actual invasion validated it. However, this validation by fire ensured that any further intelligence from "Lucy" would be treated as pure gold. The ring's sources of information included the deputy head of the German High Command's Communications Department and the head of the intelligence department of Army Group Center on the Eastern Front.

(U) German knowledge of the spy ring's activities came from monitoring radio activity out of Switzerland. Ironically, German counterintelligence never detected the flow of information going from German sources to the ring because that traffic was buried in Enigma traffic. General Fritz Thiele, deputy head of the Communications Department, provided "Lucy" with an Enigma machine, used by the Germans to encrypt their military messages, along with the necessary settings.

(U) Thiele then arranged with his boss, who was also in on the conspiracy, to recruit a small group of telegraph officials to send messages to callsign RAHS (which he had assigned to "Lucy") as part of routine traffic sent daily from the communications center of the Army High Command. The telegraphers apparently were not aware of what they were sending, or who RAHS really was. They simply did their jobs and relayed encrypted messages, as ordered.

(U) Larger view of photo

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